



RMC Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: January 24, 2022

Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Type: Zoom Teleconference

Participants: Senator Addie Eckardt, Greg Padgham, Scott Warner, Alice Settle-Raskin, Cassie Shirk, Don Mulrine, Matt Tefteau, Tyler Patton, Co-Chair Chris Benzing, Co-Chair Lindsay Thompson, Steve McHenry, Monique Snyder, John Hartline, Bill Christopher, Debbie Bowden, Andrew Cassilly, Kaleigh Leager Diane Hsu, Kelly Dudeck, Charlotte Davis, Megan D'Arcy, Dakota Matthews, Amanda Clevenger.

- I. Welcome and Introductions: Co-chair Chris Benzing welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 2:03pm.
- II. Review of January 10, 2022 Meeting Minutes: Co-chair Chris Benzing asked for a motion to accept the 1.10.2022 meeting minutes. Tyler Patton made the motion and Matt Tefteau seconded it. Co-Chair Benzing asked if there was any discussion. There was none. The minutes were unanimously accepted.
- III. FY2023 Budget Update: Ms. Charlotte Davis reported that the Rural Maryland Council is to receive \$9 million in the FY2023 budget. Ms. Davis stated that she will meet with the Chair of Appropriations tomorrow (1/25/2022) and the bill hearings are 2/23/2022 in the House and 2/29/2022 in the Senate.
 - a. SB290/HB300: Budget Bill (Fiscal Year 2023): Ms. Davis further reported that the Governor fully funded Program Open Space (POS) and that an additional \$85 million for community playgrounds for the local parks and full repayment of the borrowed funds for POS. Ms. Davis stated that it appears to be a good year, and we should all be thankful to the Governor. Committee members discussed additional broadband funding in the Capital budget and Mr. Steve McHenry stated the Governor included an additional million dollars to be split between two programs - the Livestock Processing grant program and the Wood Products Industry Equity Investment Relief Fund. Ms. Davis added that SMADC was fully funded and that the Council will be sending thank you letters to the Governor Hogan and Secretary Brinkley.
 - b. SB291/HB301: Creation of a State Debt – Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Loan of 2022, and the Maryland Consolidated Capital Bond Loans of 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021. Ms. Charlotte Davis reported that the broadband funding, the Intergenerational Center in Cambridge, the Asian American Center in Frederick, and the Frederick Innovation and Technology Center as well as \$50 million for legislative bond initiatives are included in this bill.
- IV. 2022 Legislative Priorities Post Card Update: Ms. Charlotte Davis reported that the post card has been ordered and will be mailed next week. The postcard will remind recipients of the Council's priorities. Mr. Matt Tefteau asked Ms. Davis if RMC will be presenting in front of the Eastern Shore Delegation. Ms. Davis replied that the Council usually attends with the Regional Councils, and they will discuss.
- V. 2022 Bill Tracking

- a. SB-256/HB-31: Maryland Energy Administration – Resiliency Hub Grant Program and Fund, Senate 2/01@1:00pm, Finance Committee. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that this was flagged because for the resiliency component and would fund microgrids and entities that are capable for storage for community solar projects. *Status: Monitor*
- b. SB-264/HB-76: Community Solar Energy Generating Systems - Exemption From Energy and Property Taxes, Senate 1/25@2:30pm, Budget & Taxation Committee. Ms. Davis reported that this bill will incentivize solar on brownfields, parking canopies, and rooftops. The Committee discussed talking to MACo. *Status: Monitor.*
- c. SB-310: Small, Minority, and Women-Owned Businesses Account - Local State of Emergency, Senate – First Reading – Budget & Taxation. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that this is the VOLT program and allows for grant in the amount of \$50,000 if a state of emergency is called. *Status: Monitor*
- d. SB-318: More Opportunities for Career-Focused Students Act of 2022, Senate First Reading – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs. Ms. Davis stated that this bill is a mandate that focuses on more career and technology education into the public school system. *Status: Monitor*
- e. SB-343: State Designations - State Spirit - Maryland Rye. Support. The Committee discussed how this bill relates to value added agriculture. *Status: Support*
- f. SB-344: Retirement Tax Reduction Act of 2022, Senate - First Reading - Budget and Taxation. Ms. Davis stated that this relates to retirement income. *Status: Support*
- g. SB-348: Conservation Finance Act, Senate - First Reading - Budget and Taxation and Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs. *Status: Monitor* and Co-Chair Lindsay Thompson will take a closer look at the bill.
- h. SB-354: Bay Restoration Fund - Intended Use Plans and Privately Owned Wastewater Facilities, Senate - First Reading - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that this bill is requiring a use plan and suggested it be monitored. *Status: Monitor.*
- i. SB369: Income Tax - Return Preparation Assistance Program for Low-Income Families, Senate - First Reading Budget and Taxation. The Committee discussed how this would be an extension of the EITC. *Status: Support*
- j. SB378: Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland - Funding for Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission, Senate - First Reading Budget and Taxation. The Committee felt it should be monitored since it is not a statewide program. *Status: Monitor*
- k. SB333: Income Tax - Subtraction Modification - Expenses of Medical Cannabis Grower, Processor, Dispensary, or Independent Testing Laboratory. The Committee discussed the bill and decided it best to monitor it. *Status: Monitor.*
- l. SB92: Maryland Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act. Ms. Davis stated that this is the heir's property bill, and the USDA farm service agency has a program to help with the issues related to heir's challenge. Ms. Davis suggested that the Committee support the bill. *Status: Support.*

VI. Other

- a. Matt Tefteau gave an overview on a bill that will be introduced that relates to sales and use tax exemption on electric for small power agriculture operations.
- b. Co-Chair Lindsay Thompson provided background on SB268: Pesticide Regulation - Transfer to Department of the Environment and the Committee discussed the bill. Mr. Matt Tefteau made the motion to oppose it and Senator

Eckardt seconded it. The Committee decided to oppose SB268 and Ms. Thompson stated that she will work with RMC on the talking points.

- c. Mr. John Hartline had a question about HB15 Invasive and Native Plants – Classification, Listing, Use, and Sales and Use Tax and the challenge with enforcement due to the ubiquitous of some the species listed. The Committee decided to monitor HB15.

VII. Other: Ms. Charlotte Davis reviewed the dates below.

- a. Virtual Legislative Lunch – Friday, January 28, 2022, 12:00pm to 2:00pm: Invited everyone to come the quarterly meeting.
- b. Virtual Rural Maryland Day – Thursday, February 10, 2022, 8:30am to 12:30pm
 - i. Talking Points and materials: The Committee reviewed the 2021 talking points and felt they were good to carry over into this year. RMC staff will formulate and present at the next meeting.
 - ii. 2021 Talking Points for Review:

Support for the Budget	Support for Rural Economic Development
Support for RMPIF	Support For Infrastructure
Support for Broadband Expansion	POS
Support for Healthcare and Telehealth	Community Development Network

- c. In-person Maryland Day Lunch on a Friday, March 25, 2022, 11:00am to 1:00pm

VIII. Adjourn: Co-chair Chris Benzing thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Don Mulrine made the motion. John Hartline seconded it. The meeting adjourned at 2:58pm.

Next Meeting: Monday, January 31, 2022, 2pm-3pm, Zoom Teleconference